

# Unlucky King Country Squire

Sandringham  
Where His Majesty  
drops the firesome  
Etiquette of Throne  
and Court



Queen  
Alexandra

The reversion of the best types of royalty in Europe from the pomp and circumstance of exalted rank and their desire to return, as much as society will permit them, to a plainer and more healthy mode of life is more strongly shown in King Edward of England than by any other great sovereign aside from unhappy Czar of Russia, King Edward, who loves roast short ribs of beef and Irish potatoes better than any other dish known to the royal cooks, who much prefers his private country home to the famous palaces left him by such famous old English monarchs as Henry VIII. or the ill-fated Charles I., who loved Buckingham Palace best of all the Stuart royal residences.

The loyal Englishman, too, is proud of the fact that the man whom he considers the first gentleman in Europe cares more for his comparatively modest country estate, loves to look over his horses and his cattle, to study his wheat crop and his bird coverts, and is undoubtedly the most ardent advocate of a simple, healthy existence, lives as close to Dame Nature's bosom as the etiquette that hedges about an emperor of India and an English king will allow. The Queen, for her part, can churn as good butter and put it into as shapely a mold as any dairymaid in the three kingdoms. The King's daughters in several instances have shown a decided preference for country life, without the fuss and feathers which must be maintained when the royal family inhabits a so-called royal residence. Sandringham is not one of these, but the private property of Edward as a simple English citizen, and he farms this estate and makes it pay, a thing that many an untitled Englishman has failed to accomplish to his cost.

Popular as the King undoubtedly is, among all classes of his subjects, it is as a country gentleman that he is seen at his best. This is the role he fulfills when at Sandringham, his country home, where he can doff his crown and snap the bonds of royal etiquette. As such he is a model landlord, a successful farmer, a sanitary reformer, a generous philanthropist, well-liked employer and the most practical of the three villages which comprise his estate, testify to his real interest in the permanent welfare of the people. Nowhere are the poor cared for as they are here, in the King's own Sandringham.

The King's country home, known as Sandringham House, where His Majesty is now staying, was purchased for him by his father, the Prince Consort, some 45 years ago, at the cost of \$1,200,000. The house stands in a park of some 500 acres. It is to this we add the farms, kitchen gardens and plantations, the estate comprises some 12,000 acres. It has a rent roll of about \$20,000, and if rumor is correct, the King has always made a point of spending this on improving the estate, in which case he must have spent in this way alone considerably over a million dollars. To understand what the King has accomplished at Sandringham one must glance first at the residence, then at the gardens, farms, and last, but by no means least, at the model dwellings which the King has had erected for his workmen.

## A Typical English Country House.

Sandringham House may be described as a typical country mansion; it is by no means a palace; indeed, if the truth must be told, a dozen houses could be mentioned far larger and more elaborate. Yet Sandringham House has a dignified and pleasing appearance. It is of modernized Elizabethan architecture, built of red brick, with Ketton stone dressings. Over the door at the main entrance one reads the following inscription: "This house was built by Albert Edward, Prince of Wales, and Alexandra his wife, in the year of our Lord 1870."

As a matter of fact, the estate was purchased some nine years previous to that date, but the Old Manor House was in such a condition that the King was trying to patch it up and add to it, it was found desirable to pull it all down and build an entirely new residence. Thirteen years ago Sandringham was again in the hands of the builders after

a disastrous fire, when the entire roof of the main building was damaged and the whole of the two upper floors were burned beyond the possibility of saving them. But the King, who was then, of course, the Prince of Wales, chieftain of the house, and Sandringham, or at least the new part of it, is today completely fireproof, with iron and concrete floors and roof. The fire cost the King \$70,000, and made Sandringham an unusually costly residence for that particular year. It will be seen from the above that the house is entirely a modern structure. It has a frontage of some 500 feet, and it is so designed that the majority of the principal rooms overlook the terrace and the beautiful gardens beyond.

## Where the King Enjoys Life.

Of the rooms in the house, with their costly treasures, His Majesty forbids anything like a detailed description. There are three drawing-rooms, two small ones and a large one. They are all connected with the entrance hall by a broad corridor, which is ornamented with pieces of armor, ancient china, stuffed birds, etc. The large drawing-room is a magnificent room, fitted with windows reaching from ceiling to floor. The walls are paneled with pink and blue and with moldings of gold and cream. The furniture is upholstered in pale blue, with threads of deep crimson and gold; the hangings are of rich chequered; the floor of polished oak, with rich Indian rugs distributed here and there. A plentiful scattering of music and books gives it a homelike appearance.

The apartment best known to the people of Norfolk county is the ballroom. It is of immense size and of lofty construction. There is hardly a laborer or servant in the employ of the King who cannot say that he has not had a good time in this

apartment. There are three "annual" dances held there—the "county," the "Tenants" and the "servants" balls. Until a few years ago the King and Queen always led off the dancing on these occasions, but since he ascended the throne His Majesty has been too much occupied with affairs of state to always put in a personal appearance, but with characteristic thoughtfulness sees that everything is done to make the ball a success and his working people made happy. The King's workroom in this room that His Majesty answers his correspondence and transacts all the business affairs connected with his estate. In an adjoining room may be seen a complete postoffice. You can buy a stamp or take out a money-order at Sandringham House in the very same way as you can in a postoffice in the Strand in London.

## King's Gardens and Farmhouses.

After all it is the gardens and farms that are the chief charm of Sandringham. Indeed, it was these latter which decided the King to give up Osborne House and retain Sandringham when he came to the throne.

To fully appreciate the beauty of the gardens at Sandringham, one should stand on the terrace front, when a scene of rare beauty enchants the eye. There are no geometrical beds of gorgeous mosaic, nor groups of statuary—in fact, none of the flashy devices of so-called "grand" gardens. The velvet turf descends in shallow slopes to the lake, with its blue surface dotted with tiny

islands, whose trees are mirrored in the water. Here the lake narrows until a pretty rustic bridge is able to reach across it, and further on it diminishes into a stream, trickling through purple heather and fringes of feathery bamboos, while everywhere is the singing of birds and the soothing cry of the wood pigeon.

Beyond the gardens is the park, which has a peculiarly personal interest. From his mother the King has inherited a taste for memorial trees, and the illustrious guests at Sandringham have not often escaped without being asked to plant one. At the base of each is an iron label carrying an inscription that describes the kind of tree and tells who the donor is. To enumerate them would be a tedious task to perform, for from the Kaiser and the Czar downwards there is scarcely an European potentate of importance who has not growing in Sandringham Park a tree planted with his own hands.

Reverting again to the gardens, it is interesting to note that pink chrysanthemums are said to be the favorite flower of their Majesties, and no fewer than 20,000 were planted at Sandringham, in the autumn of 1908 and 1909. So prolific have these plants proved that from a single bank four feet high no fewer than 10,000 roses were taken in one morning. The Queen has also a passion for violets of every hue, to the raising of which 200 feet of glass houses is devoted. Mention may also be made of the walled-in gardens with their treasures of rare fruits ripening seductively in the sun; the alpine gardens and the wonderful rockeries.

His Majesty's delight when at Sandringham is to visit his farm. As soon as his correspondence is finished he hastens away from his house across the park to the kennels and stables, taking visitors with him when he can persuade them to join him.

His Majesty is a farmer in the true

sense of the word, as distinguished from the owner of an estate upon which there are farms. Indeed the King, whose training has been essentially that of an English country gentleman, takes the liveliest personal interest in every detail connected with his land, himself marking out trees to be felled and directing where others should be planted, and superintending the choice of stocks, and all questions that have to do with the carrying on of the lands and farm. It is a wonderful farm, for nowhere else is so much high-bred stock to be seen upon the same area.

The glory of the farms, of course, is their stock. At Sandringham are to be found a splendid herd of pedigree Shorthorns and Southdown sheep of the first quality as the prizes that they take at all the leading shows attest. The Sandringhamshire horses are famous, the finest, indeed, to be seen anywhere. In December on the farm there were between 60 and 80 head of them, bred from the finest blood in the world. Of the thoroughbreds the same may be said, if it is necessary to do so, seeing that they include the two Derby winners, Persimmon and Diamond Jubilee, and 15 magnificent mares. In addition to these, hackneys are also bred. Nor are the Shorthorns the only cattle, for with them are herds of Irish Dexters and Jerseys. In fact, it would be interesting to know what is the total value of the stock upon the Sandringham farms. This must be enormous, but great as has been the capital outlay, the probability is that the investment pays since when the produce of such stock is put upon the market it commands high prices, and is, of course, much sought after by breeders for the value of its blood.

The Queen's model dairy is a place where she and her daughters have spent many delightful hours in the mysteries of butter-making. Also there are technical schools on the estate and a

village club. The latter was founded by the King for the benefit of the villagers and the men and youths employed on the estate.

It was the late Earl of Derby who said: "Half the secret of the King's unrivaled popularity is that he is a sportsman to the backbone." Indeed he is a past master of the gun, and ranks among the dozen best shots in the United Kingdom. He has shot bears at dangerously close quarters in the Carpathian Mountains and dozens of fierce boars have fallen to his gun in Germany. He sent a bullet through the head of one at a distance of over 200 yards.

But it is pleasant shooting that the King loves best, particularly when he can shoot over his own preserves at Sandringham. From Easter to 12,000 acres of shooting belonging to or rented by the King, and the Prince of Wales, are reserved on the estate annually, and the first shoot which takes place on the King's birthday is one of the chief events of the year. On that day about 60 beaters are employed, all of whom are uniformly dressed and each carries a flag. There are about 13,000 acres of shooting belonging to or rented by the King, and the Prince of Wales, are reserved on the estate annually, and the first shoot which takes place on the King's birthday is one of the chief events of the year. On that day about 60 beaters are employed, all of whom are uniformly dressed and each carries a flag. 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